

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01 OMB-01 /086 W

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R 090755Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5911

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 RABAT 3303

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MO SS SP

SUBJ: SAHARA ROUNDUP: POST-BOUDEFILKA RIPPLES

1. SUMMARY: MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN ATMOSPHERE SEEMS MUCH IMPROVED; SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS LINE HIGHLY POSITIVE, ALTHOUGH PRIVATE DOUBTS PERSIST CONCERNING ALGERIAN INTENTIONS. PUBLIC DEBATE LACKING WITH SEIZURES OF NUMBER OF OPPOSITION PAPERS. TAN TAN FESTIVAL NOTABLY UNBELLIGERENT THIS YEAR, ALTHOUGH NEW INCIDENTS REPORTED IN SAHARA. ENCLAVES QUIET. MEANWHILE, JOINT MOROCCAN-MAURITANIAN EXPLANATORY MISSIONS IN AFRICA, LATIN AMERICA AND MIDDLE EAST IN MOTION, AND REPORTS OF SUCCESSFUL DIPLOMACY FILTERING BACK. END SUMMARY.

2. LOCAL: MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN ATMOSPHERE FOLLOWING BOUDEFILKA VISIT SEEMS MUCH IMPROVED FROM RABAT VANTAGE POINT, ALTHOUGH WIDESPREAD BELIEF THAT A BARGAIN HAS BEEN STRUCK CONTINUES TO
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BE COUCHED IN PRIVATE DOUBTS ABOUT ITS DURABILITY AND ALGERIAN

RELIABILITY. SEMI-OFFICIAL MEDIA CONTINUE ENGAGED IN PRESENTING MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN RELATIONS IN NEW POSITIVE LIGHT. LONG, FRIENDLY LETTER FROM BOUMEDIENE TO KING HASSAN, WHICH APPEARED IN PRESS JULY 8, SPOKE GLOWINGLY OF FUTURE BUT CONTAINED GENTLE REMINDER THAT "AGREEMENTS CONCLUDED" MUST BE REALIZED. KING'S TRADITIONAL JULY 9 BIRTHDAY/YOUTH DAY ADDRESS TO NATION, THIS YEAR FROM MARRAKECH, ALSO EXPECTED TO HELP SET TONE FOR NEW MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN RELATIONSHIP.

3. OPPOSITION PRESS, ON OTHER HAND, HAS BEEN APPEARING ONLY SPORADICALLY. ACCORDING TO AN ISTIQLALI EDITOR, NUMBER OF OPPOSITION PAPERS SEIZED BECAUSE OF HOSTILE COMMENTS ON QUESTION OF RATIFICATION OF BORDER AGREEMENT. EDITOR, WHO ON PARTY'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE, COMMENTED JULY 7 THAT HIS PARTY HAD NOT YET FORMULATED ITS FORMAL POSITION ON RESULTS OF BOUTEFLIKA VISIT. PPS (COMMUNIST), WHOSE PAPER ALSO SEIZED IN PAST WEEK, SEEMS MORE INCLINED TO TOE PALACE LINE. IN JULY 7 EDITORIAL IN PPS DAILY AL BAYANE, PARTY LEADER ALI YATA WROTE THAT VIGILANCE WILL BE NEEDED TO MAINTAIN DESIRABLE "NEW DEPARTURE" IN MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN RELATIONS, BUT THAT RABAT ACCORD IS POSITIVE AND EXISTENCE OF UNANNOUNCED TERMS NORMAL.

4. TAN TAN FESTIVAL, MEANWHILE, UNDERWAY WITH NOTABLE LACK OF BELLIGERENCE THIS YEAR. PRIMIN OSMAN, LEADING LARGE MINISTERIAL DELEGATION, SPOKE OUT JULY 5 AGAINST SPANISH COLONIALISM, INCLUDING REGIME OF "TERROR" IN CEUTA AND MELILLA. MOROCCO PREPARED TO SHED ITS BLOOD, OSMAN SAID, BUT GOM'S DEVOTION TO PEACEFUL METHODS IS "FERVENT". HE ALSO CALLED ON "THIS LITTLE GROUP" (I.E., F POLISARIO) TO FOLLOW EXAMPLE OF PUNS BY RALLYING TO FORGIVING ARMS OF MAOROCCAN FATHERLAND.

5. IN THE SAHARA: SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS REPORTED VIOLENCE IN EL-AYUN JULY 6 DURING CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN PARTISANS OF PUNS AND F POLISARIO. REPORT CLAIMED THAT POLISARIO MEMBERS HAD ATTACKED AND TRIED TO SET FIRE TO PUNS HEADQUARTERS AND THAT SPANISH POLICE HAD TO PLACE THEMSELVES BETWEEN SUPPORTERS OF THE TWO SIDES TO QUELL THE DISTURBANCES. FOURTEEN WERE HOSPITALIZED, REPORT SAID. WE ALSO NOTE JULY 3 RADIO MADRID REPORT OF "NEW MOROCCAN ATTEMPT" TO PENETRATE SAHARA AT TAH, SITE OF OTHER RECENT INCIDENTS. REPORT SAID THAT TERRITORIAL POLICE REACTED

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IMMEDIATELY TO MOROCCAN MASSING OF TRUCKS AND JEEPS ON OWN SIDE OF BORDER AND THAT MOROCCANS SUBSEQUENTLY "RETREATED", PERHAPS WITHOUT ACTUALLY ENTERING SPANISH TERRITORY.

6. ENCLAVES: ACCORDING TO SENIOR FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCE, CEUTA AND MELILLA SITUATION STABLE AND EVENTS IN ENCLAVES HAVE BEEN EXAGGERATED IN PRESS REPORTS HERE. SPANISH EMBASSY ALSO PLAYING DOWN ENCLAVES PROBLEMS. JULY 8 SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS REPORT

OF NOMINATION OF NEW SPANISH GOVERNOR FOR CEUTA WAS GREETED AS POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT BY THE MFA SOURCE, WHO SPOKE HIGHLY OF GOVERNOR AND SAID APPOINTMENT WOULD FILL LEADERSHIP GAP WHICH HAS ALLOWED INCIDENTS TO TAKE ON EXAGGERATED IMPORTANCE. ONLY MENTION IN PRESS OF PROBLEMS IN ENCLAVES PAST FEW DAYS WERE REPORTS THAT IMAM OF CEUTA MOSQUE WAS EXPELLED JULY 2, AND THAT YOUNG MOROCCAN WHO HAD ACCOMPANIED CHIEF EDITOR OF RADIO MONTE CARLO ON BUSINESS WAS "ASSASSINATED" IN CEUTA BY SPANISH POLICE. NO DETAILS ABOUT LATTER INCIDENT HAVE APPEARED, HOWEVER.

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7. DIPLOMATIC FRONT: ALTHOUGH SUBSTANCE OF JOINT MOROCCAN-MAURITANIAN SAHARA DIPLOMACY MAY HAVE CHANGED IN LIGHT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS, JOINT EMISSARIES ARE STILL ACTIVELY ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS. FONMINS LARAKI AND OULD MOUKNASS CONTINUE THEIR AFRICAN TRAVELS AND, ACCORDING TO SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS, HAVE MADE SUCCESSFUL DEMARCHES WITH MOBUTU AND KENYATTA. IN A STRIKINGLY EXPLICIT REFERENCE, A MAP REPORT FROM BRAZZAVILLE SAID THAT LARAKI AND OULD MOUKNASS INFORMED CONGOLESE

PRESIDENT NGOUABI OF THE "ACCORD BETWEEN MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA CONCERNING THE FUTURE OF THE SAHARA" AND RECEIVED HIS COMPLIMENTS ON THE ARRANGEMENT. THIS ALSO IN HARMONY WITH REPORT FROM ZAIRE (KINSHASA 6164). (WE UNDERSTAND THAT LARAKI MAY INTERRUPT HIS VOYAGES TO ATTEND ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE STARTING JULY 12 IN JIDDA.) GOM AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON BOUTALEB AND MAURITANIAN FONMINISTRY OFFICIAL OULD CHEIKH ARE STILL SCHEDULED FOR AN ARAB WORLD MISSION, WHILE DRISS BENNOUNA, AMBASSADOR IN BEIRUT, AND OULD SIDNA, CONFIDENTIAL

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GIRM AMBASSADOR IN MOSCOW, HAVE BEEN JOINED IN THEIR MISSION TO LATIN AMERICA BY FORMER PUNS SECYGEN OULD ER-RACHID. BENNOUNA AND OULD ER-RACHID SCHEDULED TO LEAVE RABAT AND TRANSIT U.S. JULY 8. FINALLY, A MAP REPORT FROM NOUAKCHOTT SAYS THAT GOM AMBASSADOR TO ALGIERS SENOUSSE ARRIVED IN MAURITANIA JULY 6 WITH A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM KING HASSAN TO OULD DADDAH.

8. ICJ PRESENTATIONS: SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS ANNOUNCED JULY 8 THAT MOROCCAN AND MAURITANIAN PRESENTATIONS BEFORE ICJ ARE "IN AGREEMENT," ALTHOUGH WE DETECT DERISIVE TONE IN REPORT THAT MAURITANIANS STRESSING "MYSTICAL TIES" BETWEEN THEIR COUNTRY AND THE SAHARA. AT SAME TIME, OUR READING OF MOROCCAN ROYAL ATTORNEY BENJELLOUN'S PRESENTATION BEFORE ICJ DOES NOT SUPPORT SPANISH PRESS CONCLUSION (MADRID 4672) THAT HE DELIBERATELY DOWNPLAYED GOM CLAIMS TO RIO DE ORO AS OPPOSED TO SAQUIET EL HAMRA. ALTHOUGH FINAL INSTALLMENT OF FULL TEXT OF HIS STATEMENT NOT YET PUBLISHED HERE, PORTIONS WE HAVE SEEN SO FAR SEEM TO MAKE SERIOUS, OR AT LEAST LONGWINDED, EFFORT TO DOCUMENT MOROCCAN INFLUENCE FAR SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST. BENJELLOUN ALSO SEEMS TO HAVE TRIED HARD TO MAKE POINT THAT FRENCH CONSIDERED RIO DE ORO AS PART OF MOROCCO AND ALLOWED SPANISH CONTROL OF AREA AS A "FAVOR". WE SUSPECT BENJELLOUN MAY HAVE SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN MAKING ONLY "INDIRECT" REFERENCES TO SOUTHERN PART OF SAHARA BECAUSE CASE BETTER DOCUMENTED WITH REGARD TO NORTHERN PART. MOROCCANS ALSO NO DOUBT HAVE MORE ACUTE INTEREST IN PHOSPHATE-RICH SAQUIET EL HAMRA.
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